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## COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

*U.S. House of Representatives*

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

September 29, 2004

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ROBERT S. RANGEL, STAFF DIRECTOR

Honorable Les Brownlee  
Acting Secretary of the Army  
1600 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-1600

Dear Secretary Brownlee:

I recently had the honor and privilege to meet with National Guard troops from my home state of Missouri who were preparing to deploy for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As you can imagine, the tears of sadness and the heartbreak of separation was on all the faces of loved ones who have been told that their service member will be leaving their family, friends and homes in Warrensburg, Missouri for 18 months in order to meet the military mission in Iraq.

It was extremely difficult for me to explain to these fine patriotic Americans, why their Army family must face such an extended length of separation, particularly when they hear that the Marine Corps has been able to meet operational requirements with shorter lengths of deployments.

I think it is imperative to the soldiers and their families and, frankly, only a matter of fairness that the Army review its current deployment policy of one year in theatre, and implement a deployment schedule that is comparable to the Marine Corps. If the Marines are able to manage their forces on a 7 month rotation policy, than surely the Army should be able to do so as well.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and hope to hear from you shortly on the efforts the Army will undertake to address this issue.

Yours Very Truly,



IKE SKELTON  
Member of Congress